availability of products at reasonable prices through compulsory licensing. Many of the drugs already in the Indian market, including those in the National List of Essential Medicines 2003, are off-patent and their pricing and availability would not get affected by the new patent regime.

Decline in Applications for Ration Cards

518. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a massive decline in the number of applications received for renewal of ration cards in the capital;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is a fact that PDS has lost its relevance;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether ration cards have become redundant as identity/ residential proof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Delhi has migratory population and perhaps the cardholders did not apply, as they have migrated/shifted out of Delhi. It has eliminated bogus cards. Under APL categories only wheat @ Rs. 6.80 per kg. and rice @ Rs. 9.00 per kg. is provided and foodgrains of the same quality are available at a slightly higher rate in the open market as such people don't feel the need to renew their APL ration cards.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) As per the PDS (Control) Order, 2001, Ration cards shall not be used as documents of identity.

Irregularities in TPDS in Punjab and Bihar

†519. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state: